

THE BANKEI SUTRA

Now try to understand this beautiful anecdote.

A ZEN STUDENT CAME TO BANKEI AND SAID: "MASTER, I HAVE AN UNGOVERNABLE TEMPER -- HOW CAN I CURE IT?"

He has accepted one thing, that he has an ungovernable temper; now he wants to cure it. Whenever there is a disease, first try to find whether there is really disease or a misunderstanding, because if there is a real disease then it can be cured, but if it is not a real disease, just a misunderstanding, then no medicine will help. Rather, on the contrary, every medicine that is given to you will be harmful. So first be perfectly clear about a disease, whether it is there or not, or whether you are simply imagining it, or whether you are simply thinking that it is there. It may not be there at all; it may be simply a misunderstanding. And the way man is confused, many of his diseases don't exist at all -- he simply believes they are there.

You also are in the same boat, so try to understand this story very deeply; it may be helpful to you. The student said,

"MASTER, I HAVE AN UNGOVERNABLE TEMPER -- HOW CAN I CURE IT?"

The disease is accepted, he does not doubt it; he is asking for the cure. Never ask for the cure. First try to find out whether the disease exists or not. First move into the disease and diagnose it, decipher it, scrutinize it; move into the disease first before you ask for a cure. Don't accept any disease just on the surface, because the surface is where others meet you, and the surface is where others reflect in you, and the surface is where others color you. It may not be a disease at all, it may be just the reflection of others.

It is just like a silent lake, and you stand on the bank of the lake with your orange robe, and the water near you looks orange, reflects you. The lake may think that it has become orange. How to get rid of it? Where to find the cure? Whom to ask?

Don't go to the experts immediately. First try to find out whether it is really a disease or just a reflection. Just being alert will do much: many of your diseases will simply disappear without any cure, no medicine is needed.

"SHOW ME THIS TEMPER," SAID BANKEI, "IT SOUNDS FASCINATING."

A man like Bankei immediately starts working on the disease, not on the cure. He is not a psychoanalyst; a psychoanalyst starts working for the cure -- and that is the difference. Now new trends in psychiatry are coming up which start working on the disease, not on the cure. New trends are developing: they are nearer to reality, and nearer to Zen, and nearer to religion. Within this century psychiatry will take on a more religious color, and then it will not be just a therapy, it will really become a healing force -- because therapy thinks of a cure, and a healing force brings your consciousness to the disease.

Out of a hundred diseases, ninety-nine will disappear simply by bringing your consciousness to them. They are false diseases; they exist because you are standing with your back towards them. Face them, and they go, and they disappear. That is the meaning of encounter -- and encounter groups can be helpful, because the whole message is how to encounter things as they are. Don't think of cure, don't think of medicine, don't think of what to do; the real thing is, first, to know what is there.

Mind has deceived you in so many ways that a disease appears on the surface but there is no disease deep down; or a disease appears on the surface, but you move within and you find there are other diseases, and that was just a trick to deceive you, that was not the real disease.

A MAN CAME TO ME and he said, "My mind is very much disturbed. I am continuously tense, anxiety is there, I cannot sleep. So give me some technique of meditation -- how to be silent and at peace."

I asked him, "What is really the problem? Do you really want to be at peace with yourself?"

He said, "Yes, I am a seeker, and I have been to Sri Aurobindo's ashram, and I have been to Sri Raman's ashram, and I have been everywhere, and nothing helps."

So I asked him, "Have you ever thought about it -- that when nothing helps maybe the disease is false? Or that you have labeled it falsely? Or that the container contains something else which is not written on it? You easily accept that Sri Aurobindo failed, Sri Raman failed, and you have moved all around..." And he was feeling very victorious that everybody had failed, and nobody had been able to help, that everybody was bogus. And then I told him, "Sooner or later you will go and say the same about me also, because I don't see that you are a spiritual seeker, I don't see that you are really interested in being at peace with yourself. Just tell me, what is your anxiety? What is your tension? Just go on telling me what thoughts come continuously to you, and why you go on thinking about them."

He said, "Not many, only one thought: I had a son, he is still alive -- but no more a son to me. I have thrown him out. I am a rich man, and he had fallen in love with a girl not of my caste, and economically also below my status, uneducated. And I told the boy, "If you want to marry this girl then never come back to this house." And he never came back." And now I am getting old. The boy lives in poverty with the girl, and I continuously think about the boy, and this is my trouble. You give me some technique of meditation."

I said: "How will this technique of meditation help? -- because the technique of meditation will not bring the boy home. And this is such a simple thing, there is no need to go to Aurobindo, there is no need to go to Sri Raman or come to me. A sword is not needed for your problem, a needle will do. You are looking for swords, and then swords prove failures because you need only a needle. This is not a spiritual problem, just ego. Why shouldn't one fall in love with a girl who is economically below one's status? Is love something economical? Something to think of in terms of finance, economics, money, wealth, status?"

I told him one story: One marriage agent came to a young man and told him, "I have got a very beautiful girl, just exactly fit for you."

The boy said, "Don't bother me. I am not interested."

The marriage agent said, "I know, but don't be worried, I have another girl who will bring five thousand rupees in dowry."

The young man said, "Stop talking nonsense. I am not interested in money either! You simply go."

The man said, "I know. You don't bother! If five thousand is not enough, I have another girl who will bring twenty-five thousand rupees in dowry."

The boy said, "You simply get out of my room, because if ever I get married, it is for me to think about, it is not a question for an agent to settle. You simply get out of it! Don't make me angry!"

The agent said, "Okay, now I understand. You are not interested in beauty, you are not interested in money. I have a girl who comes from a family of long tradition, a very famous family -- everybody knows about them, and four prime ministers have come from that family in the past. So you are interested in family, right?"

Now by this time the boy was very very angry and he wanted to physically throw this man out. And when by physically forcing him he was just throwing him out of the door, he said, "If I ever get married it will be for love and nothing else."

The agent said, "Then why in the first place didn't you tell me? I have those kinds of girls too." I told this man this story.

Love is not manageable, it is simply something that happens, and the moment you try to manage it everything misfires. So I told that man, "Just go and ask your son's forgiveness -- that's what is needed. No meditation technique, no Aurobindo, no Raman, no Osho, nobody can help you. Simply go to your boy and ask his forgiveness! -- that's what is needed. Accept and welcome him back. It is just the ego that is troubling you. And if ego is troubling you then the disease is different. You seek meditation, and you think through meditation silence will be possible? No."

MEDITATION CAN BE A HELP only to that person who has come to a right understanding with his inner diseases, when he has come to understand which disease is false, which disease is wrongly identified, and which disease is not there at all -- the container is empty.

When one has come to an understanding, a deep understanding with all one's diseases, then ninety-nine percent of the diseases disappear -- because you can do something and they disappear. Then only one thing remains, and that one thing is spiritual search.... A deep anguish, unrelated to this world, not related with anything in this world: son, father, money, prestige, power -- nothing. It is not related to them, it is simply existential. Deep down, if you can pinpoint it, it is how to know oneself. Who am I? Then this anguish becomes the search. Then meditation can help -- never before it. Before it, other things are needed: needles will do, why carry a sword unnecessarily? And where needles will do, swords will be failures. This is what is happening to millions of people all around the world.

This Bankei is a master. He immediately got to the point, to the business.

"SHOW ME THIS TEMPER," said he, "IT SOUNDS FASCINATING."

It sounds fascinating, really. Why does this Bankei say it sounds fascinating? -- because the whole thing is false. This boy, this student has never looked within. He is seeking for a method and he has not diagnosed what his disease is.

"I HAVEN'T GOT IT RIGHT NOW," SAID THE STUDENT, "SO I CAN'T SHOW IT TO YOU."

You cannot manage to bring about anger, can you? If I tell you: "Be angry right now," what will you do? Even if you act, even if you manage somehow to pretend, it will not be anger, because deep down you will remain cool and acting. It happens! What does it mean, "it happens"? It means it happens only when you are unconscious. If you try to bring it, you are conscious. It cannot happen when you are conscious, it can happen only when you are unconscious. Unconsciousness is a MUST -- without it anger cannot happen. But still, the boy said:

"I HAVEN'T GOT IT RIGHT NOW, SO I CAN'T SHOW IT TO YOU."

"WELL THEN," SAID BANKEI, "BRING IT TO ME WHEN YOU HAVE IT."

"BUT I CAN'T BRING IT JUST WHEN I HAPPEN TO HAVE IT," PROTESTED THE STUDENT. "IT ARISES UNEXPECTEDLY, AND I WOULD SURELY LOSE IT BEFORE I GOT IT TO YOU."

Now, Bankei has put him on the right path. He has already moved along, he is already nearing the goal, because he is now becoming aware of things of which he was never aware. The first thing he becomes aware of is that he cannot produce it right now. It cannot be produced; it happens when it happens -- it is an unconscious force, you cannot bring it about consciously. That means if he goes further, the next step will be that he remains conscious, and if you remain conscious it cannot happen